DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 296 540 EC 210 309

AUTHOR Kiernan, Chris; Kiernan, Diana
TITLE Challenging Behaviour in Schools for Students with Severe Learning Difficulties.
PUB DATE Oct 87
NOTE 36p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (14th, Chicago, IL, October 29-30, 1987).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adaptive Behavior (of Disabled); Aggression; Antisocial Behavior; *Behavior Disorders; Behavior Modification; Communication Skills; Day Schools; Foreign Countries; Inservice Education; *Mainstreaming; Normalization (Handicapped); Self Destructive Behavior; *Severe Mental Retardation; Staff Development; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS *England; *Wales

ABSTRACT

In light of a current movement in England and Wales toward integrating severely retarded students with those having more moderate learning difficulties, results of a survey are reported whose purpose was to identify numbers and characteristics of severely retarded students who exhibit disruptive challenging behaviors, the type of provisions currently offered to them, and the level of related inservice training provided for staff. Out of a sample of 137, usable returns from 68 schools were received, representing 17 percent of all such day schools in England and Wales. In addition, detailed data on 100 individual students from a subsample of 8 schools were analyzed. Examples of challenging behaviors included destruction of equipment, aggression, self-injury, pica, noncompliance, and stereotyped behavior. Results suggested that the majority of behaviorally challenging severely retarded students are fully mobile and tend to vary greatly in communication skills, indicating the feasibility of a variety of approaches to remediation. It is suggested that those with lower mobility and lower cognitive ability require intervention based on behavioral principles. Inservice staff training to deal with difficult behaviors was reportedly minimal. The great majority of schools accepted as appropriate the responsibility of educating these students. (Eleven tables are presented.) (JW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED296540

Challenging Behaviour in Schools for Students with Severe Learning Difficulties

Chris Kiernan, Hester Adrian Research Centre
University of Manchester

Diana Kiernan, Department of Education
Manchester Polytechnic

Paper presented to the TASH Conference
Chicago, October 1987

EC 210 309

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C. C. Kiernan

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

October 1987

Challenging Behaviour in Schools for Students with Severe Learning Difficulties

Chris Kiernan, Hester Adrian Research Centre
University of Manchester

Diana Kiernan, Department of Education
Manchester Polytechnic

Introduction

Moves toward the integration of school students with learning difficulties highlight the characteristics and needs of several groups of students because of the specific challenges which they make to the feasibility of their integration. These groups include students with multiple impairments and those whose behaviour is dangerous to themselves or others or interferes significantly with their education. In this paper we will concentrate or students with dangerous or disruptive challenging behaviour.

We will discuss the policy context in the UK concerning integration and report a postal survey of a sample of schools for students with severe learning difficulties (Trainable Mentally Retarded). The purpose of the survey was to identify the numbers and characteristics of students with challenging behaviour, the type of provision currently offered to them, and the specialist in-service training provided for their teachers and others working with them. Implications are drawn for policy and provision of in-service support and training.

Copies of this paper can be obtained from Professor C Kiernan, HARC, The University, Manchester M13 9PL, England.

The Policy Context

This section of the paper aims to provide a brief summary of the law and government policy in England and Wales relating to students with special educational needs. The Education Act of 1981 (HMSO, 1981) is the central law governing special education. A school student is deemed to have Special Educational Needs under the terms of the 1981 Act "if he has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him". "A child has a learning difficulty if (a) he has significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of his age; or (b) he has a disability which either prevents or hinders him from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided in schools, within the area of the local authority concerned, for children of his age". Special educational provision can range from additional resources and/or staffing in a mainstream school to alternative provision in a totally separate school.

The terms of the Act with regard to integration are not strong. Local authorities are told it is their "duty" to educate a school student with special educational needs in an ordinary school provided that the following conditions are met:

> "(a) his receiving the special educational provision that he requires.
>
> (b) the provision of efficient instruction for the children with whom he will be educated; and
>
> (c) the efficient use of resources."

A brief consideration of these conditions will be enough to demonstrate that they give plenty of escape clauses for LEAs reluctant for reasons of economics or principles to pursue a policy of integration.

To date the integration of students with severe learning difficulties reflects local initiatives. Some integration of students through the establishment of units attached to mainstream schools has occurred. However a major development has been the integration of students with severe learning difficulties with those with moderate learning difficulties. In the case of students with challenging behaviours pressure toward mainstream integration may lead to increased segregation. One option which has some support is the establishment of specialist residential schools accepting ten to fourteen pupils with the intention of providing treatment for problems and subsequent reintegration in the special school system.

A further strand in policy, the closure of long stay mental handicap hospitals, is also relevant. Until the late 1970s school age students with problem behaviours were very commonly catered for in such hospitals. From the late 1970s policy has led to the non-admission of school age students (up to 19) and a closure of mental handicap hospital schools. A directive has now been issued to the effect that all school-age people with mental handicap shall be discharged from hospitals by the end of 1987.

The effect of these changes is that local authorities are having to provide education for what to many schools is a new population of students. It is certainly the case that some authorities are looking for, or providing, specialist residential provision. However, except for short-term admissions, the "back door" into the mental handicap hospitals is being closed and day schools being asked increasingly to provide education for students with challenging behaviour.

In this context the survey has the purpose of examining the current situation in day schools in respect of numbers and characteristics of students, against a background of provision available to schools including staff training.

The Survey

Research Instrument. The survey covered behaviours which offer a challenge to integration, or even to education in a special school, special provision, the abilities of students identified, including mobility, self-care and communicative abilities, their characteristics and lives, and a series of general issues concerning provision and staff support.

Items concerning challenging behaviours were framed as far as possible to operationalise challenging behaviours. For example "Do you have any (students) who, during the last four months, have attacked staff or other (students) and caused actual tissue damage such as scratches, fractures, sprains or severe bruising (caused for example by kicking, punching or pinching)?" If items were checked "yes" respondents were asked to indicate which students through code letters. The section on problems and provision covered challenging behaviours such as destruction of fabric and equipment, aggression, self-injury, pica, self-induced vomiting, non-compliance, social disruption, extreme ritualistic and stereotyped behaviour, masturbation and stripping. It also identified students requiring one-to-one staffing, employment or redeployment of extra staff, prevention of community integration and the use and side-effects of psychotropic drugs.

The survey was restricted overall to a time window of four months, the rough equivalent of one school term. Students showing extreme behaviours outside that period were identified separately. The survey was directed at students over the age of four years but children under four whom schools considered required special resources of staffing, exceptional programming or modification of the physical setting as a consequence of challenging behaviour, could be included.

The survey was developed through a series of interviews with Heads of schools, and a postal pilot with schools who were asked to query the ambiguity of items and the coverage of the survey.

Sampling A one in three sample of day schools for students with Severe Learning Difficulties listed in a standard directory (Education Authorities Yearbook, 1987) was contacted initially. Non-respondents were recontacted six weeks after the initial mail-shot. All schools were promised a copy of the report of the survey. The numbers of schools responding, refusals and irrelevant schools is given in Table 1. Only schools in England and Wales are covered in this report. Of those schools which responded, 68 returns were sufficiently well completed to be included in the analysis.

Results

This paper reports analyses of the data on the characteristics from all schools which responded to the survey. Data on individual students, including detailed data on behaviours and characteristics, is derived from a sample of 8 schools representing 100 identified pupils. Further analysis of individual data is underway.

School Size and Number of Students Identified. Schools ranged in size from 22 to 187 students with an average school size of 61 students. There was a a very wide range in the numbers and percentages of students identified as showing challenging behaviour, from nil to 50 per cent of the population of individual schools. On average 22.8 per cent of pupils were identified. This gives an estimate of 14 students in the average school of 61.

Having identified students, respondents were asked to classify them as extremely difficult, very difficult, moderately difficult or the least difficult of those identified. Clearly, the judgements of individual schools may differ in respect of this classification. However data on the individual characteristics of students, to be described in the next section, suggest that judgements were sufficiently consistent across schools to give some validity to the classification.

Table 2 shows the numbers and proportions of boys and girls at each level of difficulty as well as the total number of boys and girls identified and the total number of boys and girls in the schools. These data show that 56 per cent of all students in the schools are boys. A disproportionately higher percentage of boys were identified as showing challenging behaviour (62 per cent) (chi square = 18.05, df = 1, $p<0.01$). This disproportion is especially marked amongst pupils who are rated as extremely difficult (73 per cent) (chi square = 14.55, df = 1, $p<0.01$). There were over twice as many boys than girls identified as being extremely or very difficult.

Table 3 shows the percentages of the school population rated in terms of difficulty level. On these estimates around eight per cent of pupils, five per average school of 61 students, are rates as extremely or very difficult. Projecting to the estimated total school population this gives an estimate of just under 2000 school students in this category. Given the policy option of establishing specialist residential provision with an average of 12 students nearly 170 such units would need to be set up. We will return to this point in discussion.

Characteristics of Students. We have so far analysed a sample of 100 individual profiles. Two variables appear to be useful in describing the sample, level of mobility and rating of seriousness of problem. Table 4 shows the number of students described as independently mobile or mobile only with human or other aid, and students described as extremely or very difficult as opposed to moderately or least difficult.

The four groups differ in several ways. Groups 1 and 2, the independently mobile students, are more able in terms of self-care skills than the immobile group. Fort nine of the 81 students in Groups 1 and 2 fed independently as opposed to only one of the 19 students in Groups 3 and 4. Similarly, Groups 1 and 2 contained fewer students who could not communicate through speech, signs or even physical manipulation. Only five of the 81 mobile students had no means of communicatoon whereas 12 of the 19 students in Groups 3 and 4 had no means. In practice 22 of the independently mobile students could at least hold a simple conversation, only one of the Group 3 - 4 students was this able. Similarly the prevalence of fits was higher in Groups 3 and 4. Twelve of those 19 students had fits, including five of the six students judged extremely or

very difficult. Eighteen of the 81 Group 1 and 2 students had fits (chi square = 12.27, df =1, $p<0.01$). There were no clear differences in abilities between Groups 1 and 2 or between Groups 3 and 4. This will be a focus of further analysis with the total sample.

Table 5 shows the main challenging behaviours reported for Groups 1 and 2. The commonest behaviours were physical attacks on staff or other students for both groups. However, for twenty of the Group 1 students programmed intervention using self-defence or physical restraint was used or students were constantly supervised or kept away from other students. Group 1 students were also much more likely to be reported as having one to one or other special staffing arrangements.

The most striking differentiation between Groups 1 and 2 lies in the fact that Group 1 students tended to show multiple problems. On average they were identified through five items, Group 2 by 1.6 items per student. For example one twelve year old girl Group 1 child, living at home with her parents but with respite care in a local hostel, was described as being mobile with no difficulty in using her arms or hands and with no difficulties in seeing or hearing. She needed some help or supervision with self-care tasks but had good speech and understanding. However she attacked staff and other students, requiring restraints, supervision or to be kept away from other students. She broke windows and other fabric of the school, was self-injurious (head banging), despite having a helmet, had violent temper tantrums during which she tore her clothes, refused to cooperate, was socially disruptive (noisy) and physically disruptive, vomited her food and stripped. Her behaviour prevented her from going on school outings and necessitated special means of summoning staff. One to

one staffing was required because of her self-induced vomiting and head banging. Staff found her behaviour substantially unpredictable but felt that she used problem behaviour to gain attention and to be deliberately provocative.

Various particular features of the patterns of behaviour shown are of interest. For instance all bar one of the ten Group 1 students showing self-injurious behaviour also attacked other people. All except three of the students showing severe tantrums also attacked other people. These three were two seven year olds and a fourteen year old with good speech who was also verbally abusive. The commonest reason given for special staffing was aggressive behaviour although dangerous climbing, and SIB and self-induced vomiting, were also reasons in individual cases.

Table 6 lists the main problems reported for Groups 3 and 4. The data here are very thin but the patterns reflect the students relative lack of mobility. The commonest behaviour mentioned is SIB where restraint is used, apparently successfully in some cases. For most students in Group 3 only one or two behaviours were recorded. However, one 14 year old boy, on medication but with occasional fits, was described as having no vocal communication, communicating only by manipulation, being completely dependent in terms of self-care skills, and as being functionally blind and grossly overweight (200lbs). He attacked others, requiring self defence or physical restraint, had temper tantrums, screamed and shouted. One-to-one staffing was required in order to prevent him "destroying the environment". A pen portrait says "resists participating in activities by flopping on floor. Staff cannot lift him".

The picture emerging from Group 3 is of students with single extreme behaviours. Group 4 students had a similar low average of reported behaviour with non-compliance, screaming and shouting, and SIB most frequently quoted. It will be recalled that these students were likely to have limited or no communication skills.

The use of the judgement of schools in analyses presents a methodological problem of consistency of judgement across schools. The data just described however, suggests that schools were reasonably consistent in judgements since, at least in the case of Groups 1 and 2, the differentiation was reflected in meaningful differences in behaviours recorded. Following the full analysis of individual data we will try to refine classification of level of difficulty in terms of clusters of characteristics typical of each group.

Relation of Reported Problem Behaviour to School Variables. As already noted, schools varied substantially in the prevalence of challenging behaviour. This variability was not related to school size. The relationship to an index of socio-economic characteristics of district served was not clear (Craig, 1981). There were weak relationships between prevalence and percentage of students in the school who had three or fewer than three words with which they could express needs or requests.

These data suggest a further need to explore Local Authority policies and specific school characteristics as a basis for explaining variance.

Age. Figure 1 shows the relationship of report of challenging behaviour to age, and the report of extremely difficult or very difficult behaviour to age. It is often assumed that problem behaviour emerges in adolescence. These data show an increase with age to the mid teens. However they also show that a significant number of students under the age of twelve are identified. The fall-off in reporting in the late teens may well be accounted for by transfer to post-school provision from some schools.

What is of interest is that a relatively constant proportion of students are identified as extremely or very difficult across the age range. This reinforces the overall impression that teachers' perception of challenging behaviour is not a feature related primarily to growth in physical stature or to adolescence.

Prevalence of Selected Behaviours. The frequency of report of aggressive, self injurious and destructive behaviour was analysed for the total sample. In the 68 schools 242 students were identified as attacking staff or other pupils, an average of just over three pupils per school. One hundred and ninety seven students were identified as showing self-injurious behaviour. Of these, 73 were restrained through the use of arm-splints , helmets or other means. In only 26 instances, or 13 per cent of students showing SIB, were restraints successful in preventing SIB causing students actual tissue damage.

A total of 153 pupils were said to have caused breakages or damage through challenging behaviour or would have done so if not prevented. Damage was reported by 52 schools, the commonest type of damage being tearing down

display materials (42), with damage to windows, fixtures and fittings, doors, walls, furniture and expensive equipment being reported by between 11 and 16 schools for each type of damage.

Special provision. Relatively few schools reported that they had made special physical provision to prevent damage. Twenty had strengthened windows, walls or doors. This provision was said to be necessary in the case of 29 students with successful prevention being reported in seven schools (17 students). Only one school reported having strengthened fitments such as washbasins with successful prevention being reported for one student. One school had protected equipment. In this school one student was reported as thereby being prevented from causing damage.

These data suggest that special physical provision is relatively uncommon, and arguably not very effective when employed.

Other special provision included time-out rooms. Twenty eight schools (41 per cent) reported having this facility. They were used in 25 schools with a total of 62 pupils.

Medication. A total of 85 students (9 per cent of those identified) were said to be on medication to control problem behaviour. The most commonly mentioned medication being thioridazine (Melleril) (18 students). This relatively modest reported use of pharmacological intervention is probably an underestimate of drug use. However it does suggest that attempts to use chemical means to control behaviour are fairly restricted.

Extra staff resources. A fairly large number of pupils, 122 in 52 schools, were said to require one-to-one staffing. For 77 pupils in 33 schools redeployment of staff had occurred, 36 schools had employed extra staff to deal with 82 pupils. These data suggest that one response made by schools to meet the needs of students with challenging behaviour is to rearrange or increase staffing. In addition 24 schools had arranged special means of summoning staff (eg panic buttons), to deal with challenging behaviour, this provision being used in to a total of 51 students.

Segregation-Integration. Another response is to segregate pupils with challenging behaviour in a separate class. Only ten schools reported using this approach, although a further seven reported segregating some students with challenging behaviour and two others segregated students for part of the time. Reasons for segregation related to disruption of other students' activities, unpredictability of challenging behaviour, and the need for high staff-student ratios or for the strict use of behavioural techniques.

From the viewpoint of integration the fact that over 60 per cent of schools reported integrating all students with challenging behaviour is encouraging, at least within the special school context. However the commonest reasons given were organisational, concerned for instance with age and ability banding or with building or staff numbers (Table 7). Other reasons were pupil related, including the belief that pupils could help each other or provide good models, or staff related, for example that staff should share responsibility for challenging students or that such students were easier to teach if they were dispersed through the school.

In context of staffing issues 23 schools reported that they changed staff working with students with challenging behaviour because of problems of burn-out. In 51 schools respondents found it necessary to provide extra support to staff in the form of personal counselling, group meetings or less formal support.

Inappropriate Placement. As a check on whether the schools felt that it was really their job to educate students with challenging behaviour, they were asked if such students were inappropriately placed in their school. Only 22 schools answered "Yes", identifying a total of 31 students in all. This represents around three per cent of the group identified. The commonest reason given for inappropriate placement (7 students) was that the student was cognitively more able than other students in the school (Table 8). Six students were said to be inappropriately placed because they were labelled autistic. However 64 students in the sample overall were reported as so diagnosed and, consequently, it would seem that the majority of schools see education of these students as their responsibility.

Schools were also asked whether they had transferred pupils to other schools because of problem behaviour during the last five years. Twenty nine schools reported such transfers, covering a total of 36 pupils (Table 9). The majority of these transfers were to residential schools, or to mental handicap hospitals. These data suggest that it is not the policy of most schools or Education Authorities to transfer challenging students. Assuming a consistent rate of transfer a maximum of ten students, or around three per cent of pupils rated as extremely or very difficult, are transferred each year. However, given the total number of

schools in the England and Wales there may be 50 students transferred each year, 35 or so to residential schools or mental handicap hospitals.

Training. Data described so far suggest that schools manage and educate on the whole through staff resources and that they see this as their responsibility. Staff skills will clearly be developed from initial and in-service training and from experience. The majority of teaching staff in SLD schools in England and Wales have some form of specialist initial training. However, from our knowledge of the current content of such training, and of recommended texts, challenging behaviour does not feature heavily in training. Schools were asked about relevant in-service training. Of the 68 schools 39 said that staff had had such training (Table 10). The commonest type of in-service provision was locally organised behaviour modification courses (16 schools). A further ten schools had hired in experts in behaviour modification. The quality and content of these courses cannot be judged. One published behaviour modification course, EDY (Foxen and McBrien, 1981; McBrien and Foxen, 1981), was used by 14 schools. This is a widely disseminated pyramid training course, developed in the 1970s, which teaches basic behavioural principles and introduces time-out and over-correction as means of dealing with challenging behaviour. These sections are widely acknowledged as being inadequate as a basis for dealing with extremely difficult behaviours.

Schools also have access to other specialist support from psychologists or community teams. However, results from the postal pilot suggested that it would be different to gauge the amount and quality of such involvement through a postal survey.

A further interview-based study is being designed to gain a clearer picture of felt support and detailed training needs. However the data provided suggests that up-to-date in-service training is likely to be desirable.

The useful content of to be developed in-service training can be partly informed from the survey. A focus on the causes, management and remediation of commonly described problems could be a starting point. Schools were asked to say why pupils manifested challenging behaviour (Table 11). The commonest explanation was attention-seeking. These data suggest the exploration of specific strategies, including the teaching of appropriate alternative communication methods, in in-service courses. It is notable that the behaviour of 176 students (18.6 per cent) was described as wholly or substantially unpredictable. Unpredictability has been identified in another study as the prime source of stress for staff (Kiernan and Qureshi, 1987). Data from the sample of 100 students described earlier show that 31 per cent of the extremely and very difficult students had behaviour judged as unpredictable but only 8.5 of the moderately or least difficult students were rated as unpredictable (level 1-2, Unpred 12, Pred 29; Level 3-4, Unpred 5, Pred 54; Chi square = 7.41, df = 1, $p<0.01$). In-service courses could aim to teach methods which may reveal the antecedents of behaviour, but it is clear that currently available methods of functional or analogue assessment do not cover all cases, and new methods, based on broader and more flexible models, need to be developed. Parenthetically, the reported increase in problem behaviour when stressful events occur in the environment, for example other students showing challenging behaviours (22 per cent of students) suggests a further reason for dispersion of students with challenging behaviour throughout schools and argues against their

segregation in special 'behaviour' units.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify the numbers and characteristics of students in SLD Day Schools who show problem behaviour which presents a challenge to management and education. The study suggests that extremely or very difficult students represent arouond eight per cent of the school population. The majority (Group 1) are fully mobile and individuals present a variety of challenging behaviours. They tend to vary greatly in communication skills, suggesting that a variety of approaches to remediation is necessary. Several of the students described in pen portraits showed abilities and problems which suggested that teaching self-control, "talking therapies" or art or drama therapies might be of value. The second group of extremely or very difficult students (Group 3) appear in general to be of lower cognitive ability. They could represent challenges requiring intervention based on behavioural principles.

The central conceptual problem with the study is that it provides no way of assessing the effectiveness of the approaches currently being adopted. Differences in management skills in different schools must make some contribution to the massive between school variation in the numbers of students identified. Follow-up, assessing quality of management and remediation, is planned.

Similarly, we felt that asking schools whether they felt that they coped with difficult students well or poorly would not produce valid data. However the majority of schools clearly felt that such students were appropriately placed in their schools. Their response to challenges were,

in general, based on staff resources and from the evidence of redeployment and employment of extra staff it would appear that Education Authorities backed this strategy. The relative absence of special physical provision may have forced schools into the use of staff resources. However, their general attitude to students suggests that the use of human resources is probably their option of choice.

The study provided some evidence of transfer and use of residential schools. We are currently surveying the policies of Local Education Authorities concerning use of such provision and surveying the relatively small number of residential schools. Clearly the decision to use residential provision will depend on a number of factors, not least of which is parental request. However the study suggests quite strongly that the policy option of establishing "behavioural units" is likely to be impractical in terms of the numbers of students to be catered for. In addition the attitudes of schools in seeing it as their responsibility to educate these students, and, in the majority of cases, in seeing the desirability of them being at least integrated within the special school, suggests that such units would not be welcomed. The large number of students whose problem behaviour was seen as related to stress from immediate events suggests that grouping them in segregated units may well make their problems worse.

Given these considerations it would seem that emphasis must be placed on constructive remediation of challenging behaviour in existing schools. If, in the context of integration, students who present no challenge are increasingly integrated into the mainstream, existing schools could become units in which students with challenging behaviours, and possibly students

who are non-ambulant profoundly mentally retarded, will be educated. This could produce adverse educational environments for students and staff alike.

The alternative solution would be to remediate challenging behaviour more effectively. The reported levels of in-service training are disappointing. We would hope to complement this through a follow-up study enquiring about support services. However, the study does suggest that in-service training, either based on individual students or broader in scope, has to make a significant impact.

The study overall suggests that students with challenging behaviour of the types investigated represent a significant group whose needs have to be addressed urgently if their integration is to be seriously considered.

Summary of Key findings - Full Sample (68 schools)

	Number in Average School of 61 students
Identified Levels 1 - 4	14
Extremely or very difficult	5
Students attacking staff or other students (242)	4
SIB (197)	3
Restrained 73 Successful restraint 26	
Destructive (158)	2

Time-out rooms, - 28 schools 62 students

Medication	-	85 students
One-to-one staffing	-	122 students
Staff employed or redeployed	-	110 students
Segregated classes	-	10 schools

SLD Day Schools in England and Wales

Total	Sampled	Useable Returns
400	137 (34.2%)	68 (49.6%)

Table 1. Schools sampled. The useable returns constitute 17 per cent of all SLD day schools in England and Wales.

	Boys		Girls	Total
Students in schools (64 schools)	Total 2213	Percent (56.5)	1700	3913
Students identified	592	(62.5)	355	947
1. Extremely difficult	96	(72.7)	36	132
2. Very difficult	139	(66.8)	69	208
3. Moderately difficult	197	(55.8)	156	353
4. Least difficult	157	(68.3)	73	230

Table 2. Student numbers given and students identified. Discrepancies in totals are present because not all pupils identified were rated in terms of difficulty level.

	Percent of school population	Number in average school*	Projection to total SLD Day school population**
1. Extremely difficult	3.2)	2)	780)
	)8.2	)5	)1998
2. Very difficult	5.0)	3)	1218)
3. Moderately difficult	8.5	5	2071
4. Least difficult	5.5	4	1340

Table 3. Percentages of school population at each difficulty level with projection to national population.

* Average school size = 61 students
** Projected total student population in 400 SLD Day Schools = 24,369

	MOBILITY LEVEL		
	Independent Walking	With aid or aids	Total
1 - 2 Extremely or very difficult	Group 1 35	Group 3 6	41
3 - 4 Moderate or least difficult	Group 2 46	Group 4 13	59
Total	81	19	100

Table 4. Characteristics of students used in the individual analyses.

	Extremely or very Group 1 N = 35	Moderate or least Group 2 N = 46
Physical attacks	25(71)	10(22)
Intervention, supervision or separation	20	3
Temper tantrums	17(48)	8(17)
Non-compliance	12	3
SIB	10(29)	3(6)
Restrained	2	2
Destructive behaviour	10	4
Prevented	0	3
1 - 1 or other special staffing	17	0
Drugs	5	0
Average reported behaviours per student	5.0	1.6

Table 5 Main challenging behaviours shown by Group 1 and 2 students. Percentage figures are given in brackets.

	Extremely or very	Moderate or least
	Group 3 N = 6	Group 4 N = 13
Self injurious behaviour	0	4(31)
Restrained	3(50)	1
Destructive Behaviour	3(50)	1(8)
Non-compliance	0	3(23)
Social disruption (screaming, shouting)	2	3
1 - 1 or other special staffing	1	1
Drugs	0	1
Average reported behaviours per student	2.7	1.5

Table 6 Main challenging behaviours reported for Group 3 and 4 students. Percentage figures are given in brackets.

	Number of schools giving reason
Reasons for segregation	
Student related (disruption of other students. unpredictability, danger to other students).	7
Staff-related (need high staff ratios, use of behaviour modificaton techniques, Different curriculum).	10
Reasons given for integration	
Organisational, (age, ability, buildings, staff numbers).	26
Principles, (students helping each other, good models, belief in integration).	13
Staff-related, (sharing responsibilities, students easier to handle).	11

Table 7: Reasons for segregation and integration

Reasons why believed inappropriately placed.

(31 students in 22 schools)

Misplaced because of cognitive level	7
Autistic	6
Psychotic	4
Special educational needs, eg hearing problems	5
Aggression to other students	3
Needs 1-1 provision	3
Needs 24 hour provision	3
Needs wider social contacts	1
Waste of staff time relative to other students	2

Table 8: Reasons given for believed inappropriate placement.

Transfer of school-age students

To other LEA day school		5
To day-school in other lEA		1
Local residential school, LEA		7
Out-Borough residential school (private or voluntary)		11
		18
Mental Handicap Hospital		12
	Total:	36

Table 9: Destination of students transferred from schools because of problem behaviours (five year period).

Type of In-service Course (39 schools)	
Locally organised behaviour modification courses	16
Courses by experts in behaviour modification	10
"Education of the Developmentally Young" (EDY)	14
Lectures in school on behaviour problems	6
Autism courses	3
Unclassifiable	2

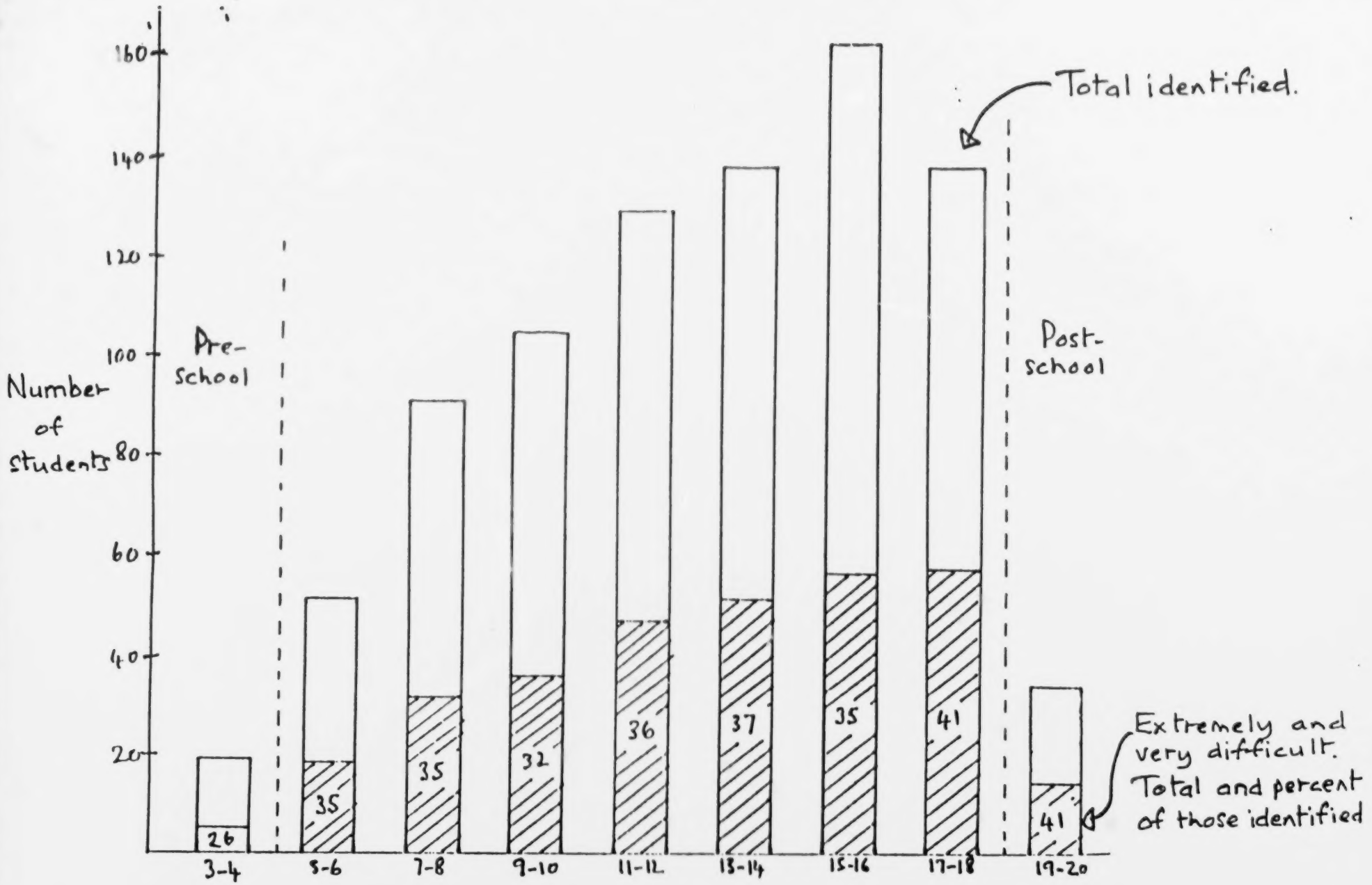
Table 10: Courses quoted by schools as in-service training courses specifically concerned with behaviour problems.

Explanation given for problem behaviour

	Total pupils	% of students identified
Attention seeking	333	35.2
Demand avoidance	242	25.6
Communication problems	229	24.2
Reaction to stressful classroom events	210	22.2
Interference with routines	169	17.8
Deliberate provocation	155	16.4
Unpredictable	176	18.6

Table 11: Reasons given by schools for individual student's challenging behaviour.

Figure 1. Number of students identified at each age level, number of students classified as extremely or very difficult and number of such students as a percentage of those identified.


Total identified.
Pre-school
Post-school
Number of students
160
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
26
35
35
35
32
36
37
35
41
41
Extremely and very difficult.
Total and percent of those identified
3-4
5-6
7-8
9-10
11-12
13-14
15-16
17-18
19-20
Age in years.